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FACILITIES FOR THE ADVANCED STUDY OF SPANISH

(A Paper Read at the Fifth Annual Meeting of Our Association Held in Washington, D. C., December 31, 1921.)

We all know, and a few of us remember, that something happened to the study of Spanish shortly after the year 1898. Prior to that date, the teaching of Spanish occupied a position similar to that now held by Italian. The language was taught in very few high schools, and although included in the curriculum of most of the larger colleges, it was studied for a year, or at most two years, by a small group of upper classmen, who had completed the requirements in Greek, Latin, French or German. The traditions of Spanish studies, of which we are justly proud, were carried on by a few scholars of the first rank, such as Ford at Harvard; Lang at Yale; Marden, then at Johns Hopkins; Rennert at Pennsylvania; Schevill, then at Yale; and Fitz-Gerald, the youngest of the group, who was then at Columbia. The grammars that were used in those days, Ramsey's or Knapp's, served to acquaint students with a knowledge of Spanish forms and syntax, and to prepare them to read literary texts with the least possible delay.

By the terms of the Treaty of Paris, Porto Rico, Guam and the Philippine Islands were ceded to the United States, and we assumed for a time a protectorate over Cuba. Linguistically speaking, this involved direct responsibility for nearly a million Spanish-speaking persons in Porto Rico, for over seven millions in the Philippines, where the previous language of administration was Spanish, and temporary supervision over a million and a half Spanish-speaking persons in Cuba. For the first time in our history, the United States was confronted with the problem of ruling peoples speaking a foreign tongue, and whose traditions and institutions differed radically from our own. At the same time, the commercial opportunities offered to the United States in Spanish America forced themselves upon the attention of the public. The registrations in our Spanish classes increased more rapidly than did the number of instructors to take care of them, and students presented themselves with the avowed purpose of learning to speak Spanish in order to be able to prepare for careers in foreign trade. Quite unexpectedly, and perhaps with some reluctance, we were obliged to recognize that

Spanish had become a "practical" subject. This admission required a revision of our methods. If our students actually wished to learn Spanish, it was no longer possible to race through a grammar in order to try to appreciate the humor of Sancho or the generous idealism of Don Quijote in the second semester of the first year. And if the speaking of the language was to be insisted upon, we were forced to make haste more slowly. Before long, students presented themselves who had devoted two years to the study of Spanish in some progressive high school and who asked what advanced work they might take in college. Most of us were obliged to advise them to transfer their interest to one of the ancient languages, or to French or German, with the lame explanation that we were only prepared to offer an elementary course, or at most, two years, of Spanish.

During the period preceding the Great War, there was a marked increase in our political, commercial and even intellectual relations with the republics to the south. The Caribbean, in particular, came to be regarded to a large degree as an economic dependency of the United States, and American commerce in that region grew to such an extent that we successfully challenged the commercial supremacy that had been divided between Great Britain and Germany. The construction of the Panama Canal increased the importance of our relations with Spanish America, and all these factors combined to support a claim, which could not possibly have been successfully debated twenty years before, that both for purposes of foreign trade and for good citizenship in the broadest sense, it was imperative that a large number of our young people in schools and colleges should have adequate training in Spanish. In order to provide this adequate training for the students who came to us in ever-increasing numbers, it was necessary to write new text-books and to adapt our instruction to meet the demand, real or fancied, for "usable" Spanish.

In many respects, we may feel proud of what has been accomplished in the last twenty years. We are no longer playing before small audiences. So far as the work of the first two years is concerned, we are playing to capacity houses, and I have seen some classes where there was "standing room only" during the first month. Spanish is now regarded almost everywhere as an important part of the high school curriculum, and while the marked preponderance of Spanish over other foreign languages in New York City and in

California must be regarded as exceptional, in all parts of the country there has been a gratifying increase in Spanish registrations.

However, we must ever be on our guard against self-complacency. Personally, I am pleased with what has been done in twenty years, but I am by no means satisfied. Countless problems still offer themselves for solution in connection with the teaching of Spanish in high schools. The development of junior high schools alone presents difficult new questions from the standpoint of language work. If we will, we can improve the teaching, the texts and the methods in secondary teaching. Yet, in general, I believe that the high schools are better equipped to give elementary instruction than are the colleges and universities to furnish advanced instruction, and here I reach the topic assigned to me.

The favorite method of securing information these days is to send out a questionnaire which annoys the recipient whether he promptly transfers it to the waste basket or whether he reluctantly replies after a six months' interval. Preferring to retain the friends I have, and not to add to the list of enemies, I determined to secure information concerning facilities for the advanced study of Spanish in the catalogues of twenty-five of our leading colleges and universities. My experience was profitable, diverting and disappointing. You doubtless recall the amusing incident of "*La Révolte des Anges*" of Anatole France, in which an angel becomes an agnostic as a consequence of reading theological works. By a similar process, I have become skeptical of the truthfulness of college bulletins. The most noticeable feature of the announcements of the various departments are the courses announced, but not given. Perhaps we may find these, together with the courses announced to be given, but postponed, in the valley of the Moon, where Astolfo, in the "*Orlando Furioso*" came upon so many delightful objects that had been lost in this world.

Spanish is taught in all the institutions whose catalogues I examined, but in a great many cases there are only three courses, including elementary work. One wonders what would be the advice given to a freshman who wished to continue his work in Spanish after a high school course of three years. One of the best of the smaller colleges in the East offers only an elementary course. Our situation with respect to what we call elective work, that is, over and above elementary work and two years of college work, is pitiable in all but about a dozen institutions. In almost all our

larger colleges and universities, a student who enters with Spanish A and continues the language in college for two years has a limited choice of courses from which to choose if any are given, that amount to from twenty-five to fifty per cent of the courses that he might elect in French. What inducements do most of us offer to students to major in Spanish and what training can we possibly provide with our limited number of courses? We have failed to keep pace with the development of Spanish in the high schools and are still devoting most of our time to secondary school work. There is no doubt in my mind that under the present conditions in most institutions, if a student who had studied both French and Spanish in high school, desired training to teach one of these languages, it would be more advantageous for him to major in French than in Spanish. Perhaps I am wrong, but the catalogues tell me that I am right. What do we offer as equivalents for the French courses with which we are all familiar, such as classical drama, eighteenth century prose and drama, lyric poetry, romanticism, nineteenth century fiction and drama, Old French philology and literature? Very occasionally we find courses on the fiction and drama of the Golden Age and nineteenth century literature, and little else. One excellent college offers in the second year a course on the literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth century novel, drama and ballads, which we must concede is a large order. Another goes out after strange gods and offers courses in the commercial geography of three Spanish-American countries, which seems to me an intrusion upon another field of learning. Whatever interests we may strive to arouse, it is not our function, in my opinion, to teach geography, political science, history or industry in their relations to Spanish America or anywhere else. To do that well demands a training which few of us possess, and besides, we have not the right to transgress on the proper duties of other departments. I agree that we must give instruction in commercial terminology and correspondence to those who desire it, but such courses should not be regarded as the capstone of our structure.

The most notable defect in college instruction in Spanish lies in the lack of language courses after the second year. Few are the colleges that offer courses in advanced syntax, composition and conversation, and without them, no training can be called adequate.

After completing all the courses in Spanish offered by his college, a student who seeks further training in that language and who is not yet discouraged, enters some graduate school with Spanish as his

major. In most cases he will find it to his advantage to specialize in French and relegate Spanish to a minor position, since the same disproportion exists between the number of French and Spanish courses in the graduate schools as in the colleges. In many institutions, the requirement for the Master's degree is twenty-four semester hours, of which half must be in the major. On this basis, in very few institutions is it possible for a man to major in Spanish and obtain his degree in one year. In some of our best graduate schools the score stands five to one, two to nothing, fourteen to three, twenty-two to ten, etc., in favor of French. Need we be surprised that, relatively speaking, few men persist in their desire to major in Spanish? Need we be surprised that in a list of sixty-six theses in Romanics presented in one of the leading graduate schools we find only six dealing with Spanish literature and philology? Among the courses that are given, historical Spanish grammar, which should be the basis of all our linguistic work, is almost entirely neglected.

I hope that no one will interpret these remarks as an attack upon French or the position that French holds in our instruction. My personal interest in France and its language and literature is just as keen as in Spain and its literature. I should regret any separatist movement which might weaken the feeling of solidarity that must exist among all philologists and students of literature, and especially among those engaged in the study of the Romance languages. We must complement, not antagonize, one another. It would be an absurdity for a man teaching Spanish to be unacquainted with French and French literatures, because of the countless points of contact both in language and literature, and Italian is just as necessary for advanced study. I do plead, however, for better facilities for the study of advanced Spanish. If a man wants to specialize in Spanish, in college or in the graduate school, it is our duty to provide him with the same opportunity as if he expressed a choice for French.

Some of our difficulties arise from the fact that advanced instruction in Greek, Latin, French and German was well organized before the study of Spanish had acquired any considerable importance, and we have been perhaps forced by circumstances to devote more attention to the organization of elementary instruction than advanced studies. We have written plenty of first-year grammars and elementary readers in the last ten years, but our contributions to the study of the Spanish language and literature have not increased in

proportion to the greatly augmented number of teachers during the same period.

Another difficulty lies in the fact that the scientific study of language and literature developed later in Spain than in France or Germany, and that the brilliant group of scholars associated with Menéndez Pidal has not yet had time to furnish us all the tools that we need to carry out investigations without serious loss of time. Anyone who has tried it must realize how much easier it is to prepare a graduate course in French than in Spanish. A great number of the texts of the most important Spanish works must be used with great caution, lexicography for the older periods is chaotic, there is no etymological dictionary worthy of the name and special studies are lacking on many important topics. We are lacking in important tools for undergraduate as well as graduate work. Unless we provide ourselves with these, we may be regarded in time as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, interested chiefly in utilitarian objects. There are countless things that we must do, and which we can do, with industry and sympathetic co-operation, and the support which the scholars of Spain have ever been ready to offer us.

What facilities for advanced study have we in addition to those provided by our colleges and graduate schools? Those who desire additional training can secure it during a limited period in many of our summer schools, and upon these I shall not dwell because they are as familiar to you as they are to me. We also have learned with pleasure of the summer courses now offered in Mexico City and Caracas which combine with instruction the opportunity to spend a couple of months in a Spanish-speaking country, the importance of which can scarcely be overestimated. Those who must stay at home should at least make every effort to keep in touch with current publications in criticism and with the creative literature of Spain and Spanish America, and this may be done by reading Professor Fitz-Gerald's admirable bibliographical notes in *HISPANIA*.

Every student or teacher of Spanish must look forward to at least a brief residence in Spain as an important part of his training. No one will question the statement that a knowledge of a foreign country derived from books is as incomplete and inaccurate as the knowledge of a language secured from grammars. By a sojourn at the Centro de estudios, one can combine an acquaintance with the life of the capital with instruction under the direction of some of Spain's best scholars. About a hundred Americans are taking ad-

vantage each year of the opportunities afforded by the Centro de estudios and return to us enriched by their contact with Spain and Spanish scholarship. We must all agree, however, that courses lasting only six weeks cannot be expected to train for serious investigation. Furthermore, it is well-nigh impossible to follow these courses and spend the time in the Biblioteca Nacional that almost any subject of investigation requires. In order to derive great benefit from study at the Centro, or anywhere else, the minimum period of residence is one year. We are familiar with the School of Classical Studies at Rome, at Athens and the School of Oriental Research at Jerusalem, supported in part by generous benefactors and in part by our universities, and to which are sent each year some of our best students in classical and Oriental languages. Might it be possible to interest men of wealth who have a love for the humanities, as well as our universities, to offer scholarships at the Centro for men who have shown aptitude for research work? We are familiar with the scholarships now offered to American students in French, Belgian and Danish universities. Might it be possible that the Spanish government would agree to offer a number of scholarships to Americans for study at the Centro? Scholarships for this purpose would be of inestimable benefit in furnishing us well-trained men and would prove a valuable factor in promoting friendship between Spain and ourselves.

As one of our chief assets for Spanish studies in this country I must mention the Hispanic Society of America. The importance of that society's library for Spanish scholarship can hardly be exaggerated and some of our best recent publications have been made possible by that amazingly rich collection. The inauguration of the Hispanic Series leads us to hope that we shall have a channel for the publication of important books dealing with Spanish literature, art and archaeology. I wish that an arrangement might be made whereby scholarships could be offered by universities or by private donors which would allow men to spend six months or a year in research work under competent direction at the Library of the Hispanic Society.

May I summarize my observations in the form of points, which has been generally accepted as the practice since 1918, and especially at Washington?

1. We must offer more advanced courses in Spanish in the colleges in order to give a fairly adequate training to those who desire

to specialize in this subject, and the study of language must receive increased emphasis.

2. We must offer more courses and a greater variety of courses, in our graduate schools, and we must insist that course in historical grammar be required for any higher degree.

3. We must take a pride in meeting the challenge of our older colleagues and prove our ability to carry on the best traditions of Hispanic studies in this country.

4. We must encourage our students and younger colleagues to take advantage of opportunities for further training offered in summer schools, especially those conducted in Spanish-speaking countries.

5. We must look upon scholarships at the Centro de estudios as a realizable ideal, and lend aid to that effect in every possible way.

6. We must assist, so far as we are able, in increasing the usefulness of the Hispanic Society of America.

I do not expect that all these aims will be realized next year, but if you agree with me that they are desirable, we should begin missionary work at once in our own institutions. If we succeed there, we shall have a very considerable public sentiment in our favor. I need hardly add that in these remarks it has not been my purpose to show the weakness of our position, but merely to suggest paths which would lead to greater usefulness.

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